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LONDON BIRD REPORT

FOR
1940

Being an Annual Report on Bird-Life within Twenty miles of
St Paul's Cathedral.

COMPILED BY

R. S. R. FITTER, F.Z.S.,

Assisted by the Recording Committee of the Ornithological Section.

Chairman, - L. PARMENTER.

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DATE OF PUBLICATION, MAY 1941.

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BACK NUMBERS OF THE LONDON BIRD REPORT.

Copies of the "London Bird Report" for 1936, 1937 and 1939 may be had, price 1s 6d (1s to members of the Society), from the Recorder, R. S. R. Fitter, 81 Ridgmount Gardens, W.C.1, or from the General Secretary of the Society, A. B. Hornblower, 91 Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill, Essex. The Report for 1936 contains a map showing the boundary of the Society's area, a radius of twenty miles from St Paul's Cathedral. The 1938 Report is out of print.



The London Bird Report, 1940.

IN its fifth issue the *London Bird Report* suffers a further sad reduction to two-fifths of its size in 1938. Surprisingly enough, however, the number of observers sending in notes has slightly increased, though the actual volume of notes is smaller. At least 25 regular observers are known to the Recorder to be serving in the Forces and many others have been evacuated or are doing war work that prevents them from bird-watching in the area. Perhaps the greatest blow suffered by London bird-watchers during the year was the closing of Staines Reservoirs in June, so that the only Metropolitan Water Board reservoirs from which records are available since the summer are those parts of Lonsdale Road and Walthamstow which can be seen from the public roadway. The canal reservoirs, Ruislip and the Brent, are both still open, but all the important sewage-farms appear to be closed, apart from the public right-of-way across Beddington. It is all the more fortunate, therefore, that the Thames has come up to scratch and produced eleven species of duck in the course of the year, including red-breasted merganser, scaup, goldeneye and smew.

The most noteworthy event of the year from an ornithological point of view was the severe cold spell in January and February, which brought three kinds of geese into the area. Other noteworthy occurrences during the year included the breeding of the black redstart in Westminster, the attempted breeding of the golden oriole at Chiswick, and visits by a hen-harrier to Staines Moor in November, several blue-headed wagtails to Beddington in May, and great grey shrikes to Ruislip, Ham Common and Headley.

Several interesting recoveries of birds ringed in the London area were reported during the year. A starling ringed at Gerrards Cross was recovered in Brandenburg, Prussia, and another ringed at Woodford Green was recovered at Rotterdam; a goosander ringed at Molesey was recovered at Archangel; and two black-headed gulls ringed at Littleton were recovered in Denmark.

In addition to the usual specific notes, special summaries are given of the status of the three species selected for special study in 1940 by the British Trust for Ornithology, the sand-martin, teal and curlew. The three species chosen for special study in 1941 are the *Lesser Whitethroat*, *Kingfisher* and *Common Snipe*. Any information about the past or present status of these species in the London area will be welcome, and especially answers to the questions set out in the recording circular sent out in January, copies of which can be obtained from the Recorder at 81 Ridgmount Gardens, W.C.1. The Recorder will also be glad to supply information about other Trust inquiries and about the Trust itself to members interested.

All the records in the specific notes are for 1940, except where otherwise indicated. The initials after each record show the observer re-

sponsible for it. The counties are indicated by their initials, viz.:— B.=Buckinghamshire; E.=Essex; H.=Hertfordshire; K.=Kent; M.=Middlesex; S.=Surrey. The following abbreviations are also used:— *B.B.*=*British Birds* magazine; *L.B.R.*=*London Bird Report*; Res.=Reservoir; S.F.=Sewage farm.

Shortage of space has dictated the omission of many notes for well-known breeding localities, such as the redstart in Epping Forest and Richmond Park, and wintering localities, such as the tree-sparrow on Staines Moor. Notes on these are, however, still welcome, so that the continuity of the Society's records can be maintained.

The Records Committee wishes to express its thanks to the following 105 observers who have sent in notes and other material during the year, and to Mrs M. S. Fitter for help with entering up the records.

P. A. Adolph.	W. E. Glegg.	E. R. Parrinder.
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(per W.L.C.).	K. D. G. Mitchell	Miss D. Whitehead.
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H. Gaster.	W. D. Park.	R. E. Windsor.
W. Gaze.	L. Parmenter.	W. A. Wright.

Birds in the London Area, 1940.

A REPORT ON BIRD-LIFE WITHIN TWENTY MILES OF ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL.

Rook. *Corvus f. frugilegus* L.

M. Regent's Park, three cawing in a tree on Nov. 12 (J.S.H.).

Jackdaw. *Corvus monedula spermologus* Vieill.

S. Richmond Park, one found dead on Apr. 7, 1940, had been ringed in the park as an adult by C.L.C. on May 15, 1935 (W.L.C.).

Starling. *Sturnus v. vulgaris* L.

B. One ringed at Gerrards Cross on Dec. 29, 1939, was recovered at Ruppin, Brandenburg, Prussia, on June 15, 1940 (*B.B.*, 34, 172).

E. Two ringed at Woodford Green by S. Boardman on Oct. 27, 1938, and Jan. 15, 1939, respectively, were recovered at Ipswich, Suffolk, on Aug. 1, 1939, and at Rotterdam, Holland, in March, 1939 (*B.B.*, 34, 36).

S. One ringed at Worcester Park by F. W. Blake on Jan. 21, 1939, was recovered at King's Somborne, Hants, Mar. 4, 1940 (*B.B.*, 34, 36).

Golden Oriole. *Oriolus o. oriolus* (L.).

M. Chiswick, a pair seen on Apr. 27 and May 4 had half completed a nest which was connected to the horizontal fork of an oak. They were not seen again and the nest was not completed (P.A.A.).

S. Wimbledon, a hen on May 11 (R.E.W.). The same observer saw another female at the same locality on Apr. 11, 1935.

Hawfinch. *Coccothraustes c. coccothraustes* (L.).

H. Noted at Broxbourne on Apr. 22 and June 6, and at Cheshunt on Aug. 18 (A.R.S.).

K. Bickley, a pair frequented a large garden for about a fortnight in the spring and occasionally in winter (R.W.H.). Petts Wood, a young bird on June 7 (R.W.H.). Westerham, bred (P.A.A.).

M. Ruislip, a family party on May 15 (H.M.R.K.), also noted on Dec. 15 (C.C.R.). Whitewebbs Park, very common from January to July (A.R.S.).

S. Many records from the usual localities on the North Downs and adjacent commons, also from Kew Gardens, Richmond Park, and Wimbledon Common. Young were seen at Fetcham (H.J.B.) and in Kew Gardens (A.F.M.).

Greenfinch. *Chloris c. chloris* (L.).

B. One recovered at Gerrards Cross on June 10, 1940, had been ringed at Oxford on Feb. 15, 1940 (*B.B.*, 34, 173).

M. St James's Park, four feeding with house-sparrows, Sept. 6 (A.V.T.).

British Goldfinch. *Carduelis c. britannica* (Hart.).

H. Watford, present in Cassiobury Park throughout the breeding season (J.A.S.).

- M. Enfield Lock, bred (A.R.S.). St John's Wood, a flock of c. 40 flew N. over Elm Tree Road on Oct. 5 (H.M.R.K.).
 S. Morden, nested in a garden (G.B.).

Siskin. *Carduelis spinus* (L.).

- E. Highams Park, four with goldfinches on alders on Dec. 26 (S.A., P.J.H.).
 H. Watford, ten with goldfinches, chaffinches, redpolls and tits on alders in Cassiobury Park on Nov. 9 (J.A.S.).
 K. Crockham Hill, over 50 at Kent Hatch on Apr. 20 (J.M.H.).
 M. Bushy Park, present in Jan., Feb., and Nov.; c. 100 on Feb. 3 and over 50 on Nov. 30, all on alders (E.W.P., J.E.R.). A flock of ten near Denham Court on Dec. 15 (C.A.W.).
 S. Barnes, one on the tow-path by Lonsdale Road Res. on Feb. 13, and two on Mar. 8 (A.H.M.). Kew Gardens, two on the tow-path on Feb. 27 (W.E.G.). Leatherhead, on alders by R. Mole, three on Jan. 28, ten on Feb. 4 and c. 13 on Dec. 22 (C.B.A., W.D.P.).

Lesser Redpoll. *Carduelis flammea cabaret* (P. L. S. Müll.).

- E. Epping Forest, a flock of c. 100 on Dec. 27 (W.A.W.).
 K. Many seen and heard on Chislehurst and Hayes Commons in the breeding season (R.W.H.).
 M. Hampstead Heath, a flock of 50-100 in a birch-wood on the West Heath on Apr. 8 (K.D.S.); a pair was present in Ken Wood in the breeding season (H.M.R.K.).
 S. Epsom Common, a flock of over 200 on birches on Jan. 18 (G.B.).

Linnet. *Carduelis cannabina cannabina* (L.).

- M. Kensington Gardens, one called over the Round Pond on Apr. 12 (E.G.P.). Regent's Park, four on Jan. 24 (H.M.R.K.).

British Bullfinch. *Pyrrhula p. nesa* Math. & Ired.

- M. Hampstead Heath, a pair nested on the West Heath (H.M.R.K.). St John's Wood, a hen frequented a garden for several days to Nov. 15 (H.M.R.K.).

Crossbill. *Loxia c. curvirostra* L.

- S. Limpsfield Common, a male in pines in area X on Mar. 2 (A.C.G.P.).

British Chaffinch. *Fringilla coelebs gengleri* Kleinschm.

- S. A.C.G.P. found a nest in a hawthorn-bush on Mickleham Downs with a detachable cover about half an inch thick, made of feathers, lichen, moss and down.

Brambling. *Fringilla montifringilla* L.

- E. Epping Forest, one or two in Knighton Wood in Jan. and Feb. (A.M., K.D.G.M., W.A.W.), and one in a garden at Leytonstone on Feb. 18 (J.H.G.P.).
 K. Shoreham, a large number with chaffinches and yellowhammers near some hayricks on Dec. 24 (J.M.H.).
 M. Hampstead Heath, one on Oct. 19 (R.S.R.F.). Staines Res., one on Jan. 14 (G.C.L.).

S. Very small numbers reported from usual haunts, max. 22 at Mit-cham Junction on Mar. 21 and half a dozen at the same locality on Feb. 10 & 24 (C.B.A.), otherwise only ones, twos and threes.

Corn-Bunting. *Emberiza calandra* L.

E. One singing at Hainault on Apr. 27 and at Romford S.F. on May 3 (B.C.L.B.).

K. Shoreham, one singing in May (R.W.H.). Westerham, three pairs nested (P.A.A.).

M. One singing in breeding season at Hayes, Heathrow, Ruislip Common and Yeoveney, and four on Staines Moor (H.M.R.K., C.A.W.).

Girl-Bunting. *Emberiza calandra* L.

S. Bookham Common, a pair on Apr. 27 (L.I.C., A.C.G.P.). Epsom Downs, a male on Mar. 21 (C.B.A.). Richmond Park, a male on July 21 (H.M.R.K.).

Tree-Sparrow. *Passer m. montanus* (L.).

H. Colne valley, three at London Colney on June 30 (E.R.P.); noted at two places near Old Parkbury on July 7, and about a mile W. of Radlett on Nov. 5 (R.S.R.F.).

Wood-Lark. *Lullula a. arborea* (L.).

S. One singing near Esher Common on May 2 (L.P.). Reported from two localities in E. Surrey at the end of April (L.I.C., A.C.G.P.).

Rock-Pipit. *Anthus spinoletta petrosus* (Mont.).

S. One near Mortlake brewery on Feb. 1 and one between Kew and Mortlake bridges on Dec. 15 (G.C.L., A.H.M.).

Blue-headed Wagtail. *Motacilla f. flava* L.

S. Beddington S.F., two males and two females were seen on various dates from May 5-18, but never more than two together and never both sexes together (C.B.A., G.B., L.I.C., R.W.M., A.C.G.P.).

Yellow Wagtail. *Motacilla flava rayi* (Bp.).

E. Two pairs bred in the open ground round Bromley Gasworks, where a pair also bred in 1938 (R.P.D.).

H. Ten pairs present at Croxley Moors and three nests found (J.A.S.).

M. Kensington Gardens, one on May 2 (M.S.O.). Primrose Hill, a pair on Sept. 26 and three at Lords on Aug. 27 (H.M.R.K.).

S. Beddington S.F., at least three pairs nested (A.C.G.P.).

Grey Wagtail. *Motacilla c. cinerea* Tunst.

H. Chorleywood, one seen in Chess valley several times in breeding season (C.C.R.). Watford, a pair nested in Cassiobury Park in the same place as in 1939 (J.A.S.).

M. Poplar, one at Leven Road gasworks on Dec. 19 (J.S.C.).

S. Fetcham, a pair bred on R. Mole (H.J.B., W.D.P.).

Pied Wagtail. *Motacilla alba yarrellii* Gould.

E. More than 35 were roosting with two yellow wagtails at a reedy pond in the Roding valley on June 5 (K.E.H.).

H./M. One ringed as a young bird at Harrow on June 12, 1934, was recovered at Watford on Jan. 24, 1940 (B.B., 34, 37).

White Wagtail. *Motacilla a. alba* L.

- E. Walthamstow Res., four males, one female and possibly others on Apr. 20 (R.S.R.F., W.A.W.).
 M. Brent Res., a female or immature male on Aug. 20 (R.S.R.F.).
 S. Beddington S.F., a female on May 18 & 25 and June 2 (L.I.C., A.C.G.P.).

British Tree-Creeper. *Certhia familiaris britannica* Ridgw.

- H. Rickmansworth, 8-9 together on one tree in the Chess valley on Apr. 4 (P.J.H.).
 M. Hyde Park and Kensington Gardens, one on Sept. 23 & 27 (E.G.P., M.S.O.).

British Nuthatch. *Sitta europaea affinis* Blyth.

- M. Regent's Park, one calling by the canal on Apr. 18 (H.M.R.K.).

British Blue Tit. *Parus caeruleus obscurus* Prazak.

- E. Buckhurst Hill, a family party of seven were seen catching flying ants in the air on their emergence on Aug. 4; house-sparrows were also catching the ants in the air, and starlings on a tree where they settled (A.B.H.).

British Marsh-Tit. *Parus palustris dresseri* Stejn.

- M. Ruislip, one roosting in a hole in the trunk of a birch on Jan. 2, also on Dec. 29, 1939 (W.R.P.).

British Willow-Tit. *Parus atricapillus kleinschmidti* Hellm.

- M. Harefield, at least two near Harefieldmoor Wharf on Oct. 20 (R.S.R.F.). Ruislip, up to four reported by several observers in winter months; but not between Mar. 15 and Sept. 14.
 S. Bookham Common, three on Mar. 16 (H.B., L.I.C.). Coulsdon, two singing several times in April (G.B.). Epsom Common, three on Feb. 24 (G.B.). Mickleham Downs, one singing on Mar. 27 (A.C.G.P.). Walton Heath, one on Jan. 7 (H.B.), and Aug. 4 (R.S.R.F.). Limpsfield Common, four on Apr. 7 (L.P.).

Great Grey Shrike. *Lanius e. excubitor* L.

- M. Ruislip, the bird that frequented Poor's Field in Nov. and Dec., 1939, was seen again on Jan. 7 (G.W.).
 S. Ham Common, one on Apr. 6 (F.R.M.). Headley, one on Feb. 13 (L.I.C.).

Red-backed Shrike. *Lanius c. collurio* L.

- E. Epping Forest, ten pairs bred in one area of about 1½ sq. miles near Connaught Water (A.M., K.D.G.M., W.A.W.). Great Parndon, one pair bred, the first in the district for some years (G.D.). Waltham Abbey, appeared to breed as usual (A.R.S.).
 K. Hayes Common, a pair frequently seen in June (R.W.H.).
 M. One pair bred at Scratch Wood (W.D.M.) and Staines Moor (A.H.M.), and two pairs probably at Ruislip (C.C.R.).
 S. Bred on Bookham Common (G.W.C.), Epsom Common (G.B., W.D.P.), Ham Common (W.L.C., D.A.R.), Kenley Common (E.W.P.) and at Farleigh (H.E.P.) and Limpsfield (B.E.B.). Early date, May 1, Mitcham Common (W.W.T.).

Spotted Flycatcher. *Muscicapa s. striata* (Pall.).

M. Late date, Oct. 5, St John's Wood (H.M.R.K.).

Pied Flycatcher. *Muscicapa h. hypoleuca* (Pall.).

S. Richmond Park, a male and possibly also a female in April (D.O'R.D.).

British Goldcrest. *Regulus r. anglorum* Hart.

K. Bickley, one or two pairs probably breed (R.W.H.).

Chiffchaff. *Phylloscopus c. collybita* (Vieill.).

M. Early date, Mar. 16, Bushy Park (J.E.R., E.W.P.).

S. Early dates, Mar. 15, Beddington Lane (A.C.G.P.); Mar. 16, Bookham Common (H.B., L.I.C.) and Richmond Park (A.H.M). Late date, Oct. 10, Beulah Hill (S.P.W.C.).

Willow-Warbler. *Phylloscopus t. trochilus* (L.).

M. Early date, Mar. 24, Ruislip (W.R.P.). Late date, Nov. 24, Staines Moor (G.C.L.).

S. Early dates, Mar. 22, Richmond Park (W.L.C., E.G.P.); Mar. 23, Beddington (R.E.W.).

Grasshopper-Warbler. *Locustella n. naevia* (Bodd.).

M. Ruislip Res., two reeling on July 5 (W.R.P., C.A.W.).

S. Reported from usual haunts, also from near Fetcham Pond (H.J.B.) and on Sheen Common on Apr. 26 (E.G.P.).

Reed-Warbler. *Acrocephalus s. scirpaceus* (Herm.).

E. Bred in the Roding valley (K.E.H.).

H. Seen at Cheshunt gravel-pit where it bred in 1939, but breeding not proved (A.R.S.).

M. Osterley Park, one heard on June 1 (C.A.W.). Staines Moor, young seen on Aug. 4 (C.A.W.).

S. Beddington Lane Ponds, four singing males (G.B.). Kew Gardens, one on May 12 (C.E.D.). Mitcham Junction gravel-pits, at least one pair bred (C.B.A., A.C.G.P.). Richmond Park, one from May 27 to June 4 (W.L.C., C.E.D., R.E.W.).

Garden-Warbler. *Sylvia borin* (Bodd.).

M. Hampstead Heath, two pairs nested on Sandy Heath (H.M.R.K.) and one pair near the Viaduct (V.R.G.). Kensington Gardens, two on Apr. 30 (M.S.O.).

S. Early date, Apr. 6, Mickleham Downs (C.B.A., A.C.G.P.).

Blackcap. *Sylvia a. atricapilla* (L.).

M. Colindale, one eating elderberries on Aug. 19 (F.J.F.B.). Hampstead Heath, two pairs nested (H.M.R.K.). Kensington, one in a garden on July 23 (M.S.O.). St John's Wood, one in a garden on Aug. 7 (H.M.R.K.).

Whitethroat. *Sylvia c. communis* Lath.

H. Early dates, Apr. 3, Cheshunt (A.R.S.); Apr. 7, Watford (J.A.S.).

M. St John's Wood, one in garden on Apr. 18 (H.M.R.K.).

Lesser Whitethroat. *Sylvia c. curruca* (L.).

H. Early date, Apr. 7, Watford (J.A.S.).

Fieldfare. *Turdus pilaris* L.

S. Late date, May 11, Beddington S.F. (G.B.).

Blackbird. *Turdus m. merula* L.

M. Kensington, a family of young birds on the roof-garden of a large department store (E.McE.).

Wheatear. *Oenanthe oe. oenanthe* (L.).

Passage through the area lasted in spring from Mar. 20 to May 15, and in autumn from Aug. 8 to Oct. 11.

M. Ruislip, about 20 going in and out of rabbit-holes on Poor's Field on May 15 were not seen on a later visit (H.M.R.K.); Stepney, one fitting about the ruins of a bomb-devastated area on Oct. 11 (H.M.T.). Regent's Park, two on Apr. 29 (A.H.M.). Kensington, one on the roof of a block of flats on Sept. 9 (Sir C. Hurcomb, *B.B.*, 34, 236).

Greenland Wheatear. *Oenanthe oe. leucorrhoa* (Gm.).

M. Ruislip, one on allotments on May 4-5 (W.R.P.); observer noted size as large as redwing, bright colour and habit of perching on top of tall thorn-hedges.

[S. Mitcham Common, a hen on Apr. 27 and two cocks on Apr. 28 were large and brightly coloured and probably of this species (W.W.T.).]

Redstart. *Phoenicurus ph. phoenicurus* (L.).

K. Petts Wood, at least four in June, one pair feeding young (R.W.H.).

Black Redstart. *Phoenicurus ochrurus gibraltariensis* (Gm.).

M. 1940 was a record year for black redstarts in London, at least five singing males being present and two broods being brought off near Westminster Abbey. This is the fourth year since 1936 that black redstarts have been present in London in summer. (For full details, see A.H.M. in *B.B.*, 34, 137.) At the Abbey a pair was first seen in April and A.H.M. saw a young bird in the garden of a house near the Cloisters on June 4. A second male was heard several times singing in Smith Sq., and on June 30 both were heard singing together in the garden. On July 30 J.A.W. saw a pair feeding young in a nest in an arch behind the old school gate. As only one hen bird was ever seen, this was probably a second brood of the original pair. A third male sang regularly in the Piccadilly area between May 29 and June 21 (G.W.C.), and was probably the same bird as was heard several times in the Berkeley Sq. and Farm St. area of Mayfair. A fourth male frequented the neighbourhood of Trafalgar Sq. between May 18 and July 2, and a fifth was seen at the British Museum (Natural History), South Kensington, from the end of May to July 2. A bird seen at the White City, Shepherd's Bush, on the day before the S. Kensington bird was first seen is supposed by A.H.M. to have been the same as the latter.

S. Tadworth, a young male on Oct. 20 (H.B.).

Swallow. *Hirundo r. rustica* L.

M. Early date, Mar. 25, Staines Res. (D.A.R.).

House-Martin. *Delichon u. urbica* L.

H. Early dates, Mar. 22, several in Cassiobury Park, and Mar. 26, a score at Rousebarn gravel-pits, Watford (J.A.S.).

Sand-Martin. *Riparia r. riparia* (L.).

See special account on p. 16.

Nightjar. *Caprimulgus e. europaeus* L.

E. Great Parndon, a few pairs breed annually in small woods in the parish (G.D.).

H. Cuffley, one in Great Wood on May 17 (A.R.S.).

S. Epsom Common, present in the breeding season (C.B.A., G.B., W.D.P.). Walton Heath, nested (L.I.C., A.C.G.P.). Wimbledon Common, one on June 2-4 (C.E.D., R.E.W.).

British Great Spotted Woodpecker. *Dryobates major anglicus* (Hart.).

E. Epping Forest, a pair watched driving starlings from a newly-made nesting-hole on May 12 (K.E.H.).

H. Watford, one of a pair in Cassiobury Park on July 11 uttered a call similar to that of the green woodpecker (J.A.S.).

M. One pair nested in Kensington Gardens (M.S.O.), and two pairs in Ken Wood (H.M.R.K.); also a pair in Holland House grounds (A.H.M.).

Wryneck. *Jynx t. torquilla* L.

K. Westerham, one in May (P.A.A.).

S. Nested at Kenley (E.W.P.); also reported in spring from Chipstead, Ham Common, Oxshott, Reigate and Tadworth.

Cuckoo. *Cuculus c. canorus* L.

M. St James's Park, a young bird on July 25 (A.V.T.).

S. Early date, Apr. 7, Beddington (A.C.G.P.).

Long-eared Owl. *Asio o. otus* (L.).

S. Reigate, one on Apr. 10 (H.G.A.).

Short-eared Owl. *Asio f. flammeus* (Pontopp.).

E. Ongar Park Wood, one on Feb. 3, 1937 (G.D.).

Kestrel. *Falco t. tinnunculus* L.

M. Nested in the S.W. tower of Westminster Abbey (C.P.) and again frequented the Imperial Institute tower in South Kensington in the breeding season (W.R.P.).

M./S. London Bridge, one on Apr. 3 (A.C.G.P.).

Hen-Harrier. *Circus cyaneus cyaneus* (L.).

M. Staines Moor, a female on Nov. 17 (G.C.L.); this appears to be the fourth Middlesex record, and the first since 1880.

Sparrow-Hawk. *Accipiter n. nisus* (L.).

S. Coulsdon, one alighted on the ground on Mar. 10 with a starling in its talons, but the starling escaped (G.B.).

Common Heron. *Ardea c. cinerea* L.

- E. There were 46 occupied nests at Walthamstow Res. (R.S.R.F., W.A.W.) and 5 at Wanstead Park (H.A.L.), compared with 45 and 13 respectively in 1939.
- H. One recovered at Rickmansworth in Nov., 1939, had been ringed as a young bird at Chilham, Kent, on May 21, 1939 (*B.B.*, 34, 39).
- M. One recovered at Greenford on Jan. 24, 1940, had been ringed as a young bird at Walland Marsh, Kent, on May 21, 1939 (*B.B.*, 34, 39).
- S. There were 3 occupied nests at Gatton Park (G.W.P.), 7 at Burwood Park, Hersham (P.A.D.H.) and 55 at Richmond Park (W.L.C.), compared with 3, 16 and 61 respectively in 1939.

Grey Geese. *Anser* sp.?

- M. Heathrow, one flying E. on Dec. 22 (C.A.W.).
- S. Richmond Park. six flew over the Pen Ponds on Jan. 20 (W.E.G.), and 20-30, not pink-feet, flew over on Dec. 28 (P.M.). Sutton, 12 flew over Belmont on Feb. 18 (P.A.C.).

White-fronted Goose. *Anser albifrons albifrons* (Scop.).

- M. Staines Moor, ten on Jan. 24 (G.W.C.).

Bean-Goose. *Anser f. fabalis* (Lath.).

- M. Staines Res., eight on the ice on Feb. 10-11 (P.W.E.C. and other observers), and eleven on Feb. 15, 16 & 22 (G.C.L., A.H.M.). (See also *B.B.*, 33, 315.)

Dark-breasted Brent-Goose. *Branta bernicla bernicla* (L.).

- M./S. Two on the Thames near Chiswick Eyot from Feb. 14-18 were seen on both sides of the river (W.R.P., E.G.P., A.H.M.; see also *B.B.*, 33, 315); there is a conflict of evidence about their tameness, as E.G.P. found them very nervous on the 16th, but E.H. told A.H.M. that he had walked up to within a few feet of them on the 18th. As this was during the cold spell, they are just as likely to have been wild as escapes.

[M. Regent's Park, a skein of 40-50 geese, probably brents, flew high and due W. over the park on Dec. 16 (E.C.W.).]

Canada Goose. *Branta c. canadensis* (L.).

- E. Walthamstow Res., one pair nested (R.S.R.F., W.A.W.).
- S. Godstone, one pair nested at Bay Pond, where 53 birds were seen on Jan. 12 (B.E.B.). Kew Gardens, one, a stranger, on Apr. 20 (A.F.M.).

Sheld-Duck. *Tadorna tadorna* (L.).

- M. Staines Res., one on Feb. 11 (W.G.E., P.T.), and two on Mar. 17 (A.H.M.) and May 5 (G.C.L., C.A.W.).

Gadwall. *Anas strepera* L.

- M. A pair on the Long Water in Kensington Gardens on Apr. 13 (M.S.O.) and one fairly tame bird in Regent's Park on Dec. 13 (E.C.W.) had probably come from St James's Park. A drake seen at Staines Res. on Apr. 6-7 (W.G.E., G.C.L., C.A.W.) may have

come either from St James's Park or from the feral stock at Barn Elms.

- M./S. R. Thames near Chiswick Eyot, up to 12 from Jan. 13 to Feb. 19 (i.e., while Barns Elms Res. probably frozen over) (many observers), and six on Nov. 6 and Dec. 5 (G.C.L.).
- S. Beddington, a pair was seen on one or other of the ponds from Feb. 24 to May 5, and a second pair on Apr. 13 (C.B.A., G.B., W.D.P., A.C.G.P.). Godstone, the old drake which has visited the Mill Pond annually since 1932 has not been reported since Nov. 11, 1939; in the 1939 *L.B.R.* it was reported by mistake from Stangrave Pond instead of the Mill Pond.

Teal. *Anas c. crecca* L.

See special account on p. 19.

Garganey. *Anas querquedula* L.

- E. A pair stayed two days on pond on Nazeing Common in 1937 (G.D.).
- S. Richmond Park, two drakes and a duck on the Upper Pen Pond on Mar. 25 (A.H.M.), and a drake on the Lower Pen Pond on Apr. 7 (F.R.M.).

Wigeon. *Anas penelope* L.

- B. Black Park, a duck on Nov. 17 (C.A.W.).
- M. Brent Res., a drake on Dec. 27 (R.S.R.F.). Kensington Gardens, one on the Round Pond on Dec. 14 (G.C.L.).
- M./S. R. Thames: at Chiswick Eyot, one on Jan. 19 (G.C.L.); above Kew Bridge, three on Jan. 4 & 25, and one on Feb. 13 (G.C.L.).
- S. Leatherhead, two on R. Mole on Jan. 20 (H.J.B.). Richmond Park, a drake on Mar. 14 (J.E.R.). Godstone, two were reported from the Mill Pond instead of from Stangrave Pond in the 1939 *L.B.R.*

Pintail. *Anas acuta acuta* L.

- M. Staines Moor, three on Feb. 11 (C.C.R.). Staines Res., one or both of the pair seen on Dec. 27, 1939, were seen on several occasions up to Mar. 2.

Shoveler. *Spatula clypeata* L.

- M. St James's Park, a full-winged duck on Mar. 16 (A.V.T.). Staines Moor, a duck on July 14 (G.C.L., A.H.M.).

[Red-crested Pochard. *Netta rufina* (Pall.).

- S. Beddington Lane Ponds, a female on Nov. 23 (L.P.). While this may have been an escape, it is worth noting that two were seen in South Wales on Dec. 1 (*B.B.*, 34, 200.)]

Common Pochard. *Aythya ferina* (L.).

- M. Osterley Park, one pair bred successfully (C.A.W.).
- M./S. R. Thames: 17 between Waterloo and Hungerford bridges on Jan. 13 (J.S.C.); noted by many observers near Chiswick Eyot up to Feb. 16, max. over 200 on Jan. 25 (G.C.L.), and from Nov. 6 onwards; seven opposite Syon House on Dec. 25 (A.F.M.).
- S. Kew Gardens, a full-winged pair bred (A.F.M.).

Tufted Duck. *Aythya fuligula* (L.).

- E. Connaught Water, two pairs on May 27 (S.A.), one pair till July (K.D.G.M.).
- H. A pair bred on a gravel-pit near Waltham Cross (R.S.R.F.).
- M. Osterley Park, at least two pairs bred (C.A.W.). Hampton Court, one pair bred (J.E.R.).
- M./S. R. Thames: numbers frequented the neighbourhood of Waterloo Bridge up to the end of March, rising to 122 on Jan. 13 (J.S.C.), 170-180 on Mar. 6 (R.S.R.F.) and 112 on Mar. 20 (W.D.P.); a pair was there on Apr. 12 (W.D.P.) and two pairs from May 2-16 (S.P.W.C.); noted by Chiswick Eyot up to Mar. 17, max. over 200 on Jan. 19 (G.C.L.), and from Dec. 5 onwards, max. over 200 on Dec. 22 (R.S.R.F.); a few noted above Kew Bridge up to Feb. 18.
- S. Three pairs bred in Kew Gardens (A.F.M.) and one pair in Richmond Park (W.E.G.). One ringed at Molesey on Oct. 25, 1937, was recovered there on Feb. 6, 1940 (B.B., 34, 42).

Scaup-Duck. *Aythya m. marila* (L.).

- [M. A drake which was first seen on the Round Pond in Kensington Gardens on Feb. 27 (W.R.P.) subsequently turned up in Regent's Park on Mar. 4-5 (H.M.R.K.), on the Thames by Cleopatra's Needle on Mar. 15 (A.V.T.) and on the lake in St James's Park on Mar. 21 (A.V.T.); it was also seen on the Serpentine, where it was foraging for bread with the tufted ducks (Lord Tavistock in *The Field*, 27/4/40, p. 672); since this bird was so tame it was doubtless an escape.]
- M./S. A duck on the Thames by Chiswick Eyot on Jan. 25 (A.H.M., G.C.L.).
- S. Lonsdale Road Res., two ducks on Dec. 15 (G.C.L.).

Goldeneye. *Bucephala c. clangula* (L.).

- M. Enfield Lock, one on R. Lea on Jan. 20 (A.R.S.). Staines Moor, one on Feb. 11 (C.C.R.). Staines Res., max. over 20 on Feb. 16 (G.C.L.); last seen on May 3 (A.H.M.).
- M./S. One on the Thames by Chiswick Eyot on Jan. 11 (H.M.R.K.) and Feb. 10 (C.C.R.).

Common Scoter. *Melanitta n. nigra* (L.).

- M. Kensington Gardens, a drake on the Long Water on July 2 (G.C.L., see also B.B., 34, 68). Staines Res., a drake on Apr. 7 (G.C.L., A.H.M., E.G.P., C.A.W.).

Goosander. *Mergus merganser merganser* L.

- E. Walthamstow Res., one on Feb. 25 (A.M., K.D.G.M., W.A.W.), and six on Apr. 20 (R.S.R.F., W.A.W.).
- M. Bushy Park, up to 12 in Jan. (J.E.R.). St James's Park, one on Feb. 8 (A.V.T.). Staines Res., max. 131 on Feb. 22 (A.H.M.); last seen on May 5 (A.H.M.).
- M./S. R. Thames: one by Chiswick Eyot on Jan. 11 & 19 (H.M.R.K., G.C.L.); noted above Kew Bridge up to Mar. 23, max. 30-40 on Feb. 10 (A.F.M.), and from Dec. 15 onwards, max. 12 on Dec. 25 (A.F.M.).

- S. Richmond Park, one to five, Mar. 2-27 (W.L.C., W.E.G., H.M.R.K., R.E.W.). One ringed at Molesey on Jan. 11, 1937, was recovered at Archangel, Russia, on Apr. 25, 1939 (*B.B.*, 34, 42).

Red-breasted Merganser. *Mergus serrator* L.

- M. Staines Res., two on Jan. 25 (G.W.C.), one to four from Feb. 15 to Mar. 13 (G.C.L., A.H.M., C.A.W., W.A.W.).
M./S. One on the Thames by Chiswick Eyot on Feb. 1 (G.C.L., A.H.M.).

Smew. *Mergus albellus* L.

- E. Walthamstow Res., max. 15 on Jan. 13 (W.A.W.), last seen on Mar. 2 (A.M., K.D.G.M.).
M. St James's Park, one on Jan. 12 (A.V.T.). Staines Res., two on Jan. 7 (G.C.L., C.A.W.), one on Feb. 4 (G.C.L.), two on Feb. 18 & 24 (G.C.L., C.A.W., W.A.W.).
M./S. R. Thames: by Chiswick Eyot, max. 37 on Feb. 20 (E.G.P.), last seen on Feb. 16; near Kew Bridge, max. seven on Feb. 10, last seen on Feb. 17 (A.F.M.).
S. Beddington Farm Pond, one to three from Jan. 28 to Feb. 24 (C.B.A., G.B., W.D.P., A.C.G.P.). Beddington Lane Ponds, one on Mar. 9 (G.B.). Lonsdale Road Res., one on Feb. 10 (C.C.R.), eight on Feb. 27 (A.H.M.), 20 on Mar. 5 (H.M.R.K.), and two, which later flew on to the river, on Dec. 22 (R.S.R.F.). Richmond Park, one or two from Feb. 10-26 (H.I.F., H.M.R.K., D.A.R., C.C.R.). Waddon Ponds, one on Feb. 18 and Mar. 3 (L.P.).

Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax c. carbo* (L.).

- E. Walthamstow Res., one on Apr. 20 and July 30 (R.S.R.F., W.A.W.).
M. Staines Res., seven flew over on Aug. 18 (G.C.L.).
M./S. One to three on the Thames from Hammersmith to Richmond on several dates from Jan. 12 to Feb. 17 (G.C.L., E.G.P., W.R.P.).

Shag. *Phalacrocorax a. aristotelis* (L.).

- M./S. One on the Thames between Barnes Bridge and Chiswick Eyot from Feb. 2-18 (G.C.L., E.G.P.), and one by Chiswick Bridge on Dec. 29 (E.G.P.).

Great Crested Grebe. *Podiceps c. cristatus* (L.).

- E. Bred as usual at Sewardstone, and for the second year in succession on the Eagle Pond at Snaresbrook (W.A.W., K.E.H.).
H. Bred as usual at Hamper Mill, also on one of the West Hyde gravel-pits (J.A.S.).
M. Bred at the Brent Res. (E.C.O.), Ruislip Res. (W.R.P.) and near Yeoveney (C.A.W.).
M./S. Up to a dozen were seen on the Thames from Richmond to Battersea from Jan. 25 to Mar. 9.
S. One pair bred at Beddington Lane Ponds (A.C.G.P.), one pair at Gatton Park (G.W.P.), one pair at Godstone (B.E.B., G.W.C.), one pair at Ham gravel-pit (W.E.G.), six pairs at Mitcham Junction gravel-pits (C.B.A.) and two pairs in Richmond Park (W.L.C.).

Red-necked Grebe. *Podiceps g. griseigena* (Bodd.).

- M. Brent Res., one on Dec. 27 (R.S.R.F.).

Black-necked Grebe. *Podiceps n. nigricollis* Brehm.

M. One near Yeoveney on Dec. 25 (C.A.W.).

S. A pair on Fetcham Pond on Apr. 12 (H.J.B.).

Red-throated Diver. *Colymbus stellatus* Pontopp.

M. Staines Res., one on Feb. 11 (P.W.E.C., G.C.L., A.H.M., P.T.).

Black-tailed Godwit. *Limosa l. limosa* (L.).

S. Brooklands S.F., one on Apr. 28 and May 2, 1939 (W.G.E.).

Common Curlew. *Numenius a. arquata* (L.).

See special account on p. 19.

Woodcock. *Scolopax rusticola* L.

M. Bushy Park, one wintered in 1939-40, and probably two in 1940-41 (J.E.R.). Ken Wood, one on Apr. 1 (H.M.R.K.). Ruislip, one in Copse Wood on Mar. 15 (R.S.R.F.). Bayswater, one picked up dead in a burial-ground on Mar. 5 (Miss E. C. Norton, *B.B.*, 34, 238).

S. Kew Gardens, two on Feb. 5 (W.R.P.). Mitcham, one at Watermeads on Feb. 12 (G.B.). Richmond Park, one on Feb. 24 and Mar. 8, two on Mar. 14 (W.L.C.).

Common Snipe. *Capella g. gallinago* (L.).

M. Hampstead Heath, one on Feb. 10 (W.E.K.P.). St James's Park, two on Jan. 8 (A.C.G.P.).

Jack Snipe. *Lymnocyptes minimus* (Brünn.).

E. Waltham Marsh, one on Mar. 9 (A.R.S.).

H. Croxley Moors, seen on Mar. 22 & 24 and Apr. 14 (J.A.S.). Watford, seen on Redheath estate on Mar. 22 (J.A.S.).

M. Bushy Park, one from Jan. 20-27 (J.E.R.). Ruislip Res., one on Jan. 9 (G.W.C.) and Mar. 15 (R.S.R.F.). Staines Moor, one on Feb. 25 (C.C.R.), and two on Nov. 24 (G.C.L.).

S. Beddington Corner, one on disused cress-beds on Feb. 10, and two on Feb. 24 (C.B.A.). Fetcham cress-beds, one and a dead bird on Feb. 4 (C.B.A., W.D.P.).

Dunlin. *Calidris alpina* (L.) ? subsp.

E. Romford S.F., 30 on Feb. 24, and c. 50 on Mar. 19 (B.C.L.B.).

M. Brent Res., one to six from Aug. 20-31 (W.G.E., R.S.R.F.). Staines Res., two on Jan. 28 (G.C.L.), three on Apr. 17 (A.H.M.), and two on Apr. 21 (G.C.L.).

S. Barnes, on Thames foreshore near Hammersmith Bridge, two to six noted by several observers between Jan. 13 and Feb. 16; 20 on Jan. 25 (M.H.B.). Beddington S.F., two on Feb. 17 (C.B.A., L.P.).

Common Sandpiper. *Actitis hypoleucos* (L.).

Passage through the area lasted from Apr. 14 to May 25 in the spring, and from July 5 to Sept. 24 in the autumn.

M. Kensington Gardens, one on Apr. 17 and May 21 (M.S.O.).

M./S. Kew Bridge, two flew from the ice on the Middlesex shore towards the railway bridge on Jan. 22 (A.F.M.).

S. Kew Gardens, one on Jan. 21 (F.D.).

Green Sandpiper. *Tringa ochropus* L.

- E. Abridge, one to five in the Roding valley from July 12 to Sept. 10 (K.E.H., A.M., K.D.G.M., A.R.S.).
- M. Bushy Park, one on the Longford river on May 13-14 (E.W.P., J.E.R.). Denham Court, one on Dec. 15 (C.A.W.). Enfield Lock, one by R. Lea on Jan. 23 (A.R.S.). Ruislip Res., two on Aug. 7 (W.R.P.). Staines Moor, one on Jan. 24 (G.W.C.), two on Sept. 21 (C.A.W.) and one on Nov. 17 (G.C.L.).

Greenshank. *Tringa nebularia* (Gunn.).

- M. Brent Res., one from Aug. 24-31 (W.G.E., R.S.R.F.). Staines Moor, one on Dec. 1 (C.C.R.).

Ringed Plover. *Charadrius h. hiaticula* L.

- E. Romford S.F., twelve on Feb. 24 and one on Mar. 7 (B.C.L.B.).
- M. Brent Res., two to five from Aug. 20-31 (W.G.E., R.S.R.F.) and fifteen on Aug. 21 (E.C.O.). Kensington Gardens, one by the Round Pond on Sept. 26 (Sir C. Hurcomb in *B.B.*, 34, 236). Staines Res., one on Apr. 17 and May 19 (A.H.M.).
- S. Beddington S.F., one on Mar. 3 (L.P.).

Golden Plover. *Pluvialis apricaria* (L.) ? subsp.

- B. Iver, six with lapwings from Aug. 10-23 (A.V.T.).
- H. Sandridge, five with lapwings on Nov. 5 (R.S.R.F.). Welwyn Garden City, 30-40 which circled over on Mar. 24 and flew off N. were probably part of three flocks totalling 200 birds, which wintered at Batchworth, 6 miles N., and were last seen on Apr. 8 (R.W.M.).
- E. Romford S.F., c. 250, mainly in breeding plumage, on Apr. 3, and fourteen on Apr. 12 (B.C.L.B.). Sewardstone, nine on Dec. 21 (K.E.H., W.A.W.). Waltham Marsh, last seen on Apr. 17, when there were c. 250, many of which appeared, without glasses, to be of the Northern subspecies (*P. a. altifrons*) (A.R.S.).
- M. Ruislip Res., one heard on Jan. 7 (G.W.); also heard going over Ruislip at night on Feb. 20 (W.R.P.).
- S. Beddington S.F., up to 13 in Jan. and Feb., and 38 on Mar. 19 (C.B.A., G.B., A.C.G.P.). Walton Heath, six on Jan. 28 (H.B.).

Common Tern. *Sterna h. hirundo* L.

- M. Enfield Lock, one on R. Lea, Apr. 23 (A.R.S.). Hampton Res., six flying over on May 2 joined the river near Sunbury Lock and flew upstream (E.W.P.). St James's Park, one on May 9 (G.C.L.).

Black-headed Gull. *Larus r. ridibundus* L.

- M. Two birds ringed at Littleton on Feb. 11, 1936, and Feb. 13, 1937, respectively, were recovered in Zealand, Denmark, one at Haslerv in the spring of 1939 and the other at Fordingborg on Nov. 16, 1938 (*B.B.*, 34, 63).

Scandinavian Lesser Black-backed Gull. *Larus f. fuscus* L.

- M. Brent Res., one, possibly two, on Oct. 27 (R.S.R.F.). Staines Res., four on Feb. 17 (C.A.W.). Hyde Park, one on the frozen Serpentine on Jan. 30 (G.C.L., A.H.M.).

M./S. R. Thames: three at Millbank on Nov. 25 (L.P.); two in Chiswick Reach on July 27 and one on Aug. 10 (A.H.M.).

S. Beddington, one with two British, on Nov. 23 (L.P.).

Iceland Gull. *Larus leucopterus* Vieill.

M. Staines Res., the bird first seen on Dec. 25, 1939, was seen by many observers up to Jan. 16, and again from Feb. 11-18.

Kittiwake. *Rissa t. tridactyla* (L.).

S. Richmond Park, an adult on the ice on the Pen Ponds on Jan. 8 (black legs, greenish-yellow bill, and size about same as adjacent black-headed gulls) (D.O'R.D.).

Water-Rail. *Rallus a. aquaticus* L.

H. Watford, one in Cassiobury Park on Mar. 10 & 22 (J.A.S.).

M. Ruislip Res., one on Dec. 28 (R.S.R.F.).

S. Beddington and Mitcham Ponds, usual winter records for Feb., Mar. and Dec. Carshalton, one on Jan. 29 (A.C.G.P.). Epsom S.F., one on Jan. 21 and Feb. 3 (H.B., L.I.C.).

Red-legged Partridge. *Alectoris r. rufa* (L.).

E. Nazeing, two on May 5 (A.R.S.). Upshire, noted on Feb. 10 and in June (A.R.S.). Waltham Abbey, two on Apr. 27 (A.R.S.).

H. Watford, seen on Redheath estate on Mar. 22 (J.A.S.).

M. Ashford, six on Aug. 25 (G.C.L.). Staines Res., a pair in nearby fields on Mar. 24 (G.C.L.).

S. Beddington S.F., one on May 11 (C.B.A., G.B.).

Special Species for 1940.

THE following reports on the three species selected by the British Trust for Ornithology for special study in 1940 are based on the Society's records, going back to 1900, and on an exhaustive review of the published literature since that date. Pressure on space unfortunately prevents us from bringing up to date the preliminary list of sources given in the *London Bird Report* for 1936, but this will be done at the first opportunity. References to counties are only to those parts which lie within twenty miles of St Paul's Cathedral (see map in 1936 *Report*).

Sand-Martin. *Riparia r. riparia* (L.).

The Sand-Martin is a common but locally distributed summer resident in the London area, and a much more widely spread passage migrant. The main factor in its breeding distribution is the nature of the subsoil, since, apart from occasionally using artificial holes such as drainpipes, it can only burrow its nesting-holes in soft rocks, such as sands and gravels. Accordingly, the sand-martin breeds in the London area only where the subsoil is sand, gravel, brick-earth or alluvium, and not at all where the subsoil is clay or chalk. Even then its distribution is limited by the number of natural or artificial cliffs or banks available, and this shortage of suitable sites is presumably responsible for its development as a colonial nester. Only one completely natural site has been recorded

round London of recent years, in a sandy bank of the Thames at Sheperton. Of the 38 other sites recorded since 1900, eighteen are in gravel or ballast pits, thirteen in sand-pits, five each in railway cuttings or embankments and in drain-pipes, three in holes in wharf-walls, and one each in a canal-bank, a road-cutting, brick-work and trenches. Man is thus a dominant factor in the ecology of the sand-martin, as with our two other native hirundines.

In North Kent the only recent breeding records are from Erith in 1929 and from Swanley Junction, where there was a small colony in a railway embankment in 1940, but prior to 1920 several colonies were known in the Bromley, Bexley and Dartford districts. South of the chalk downs there are many colonies in the belts of upper and lower greensand that stretch through the area from Sevenoaks westward across the Surrey border to Reigate. In 1940 one large colony was reported in Sevenoaks and several small ones between Sevenoaks and Riverhead, as well as one of 30-40 pairs at Brasted sand-pits. In Surrey there was a colony of 20-25 pairs at Moorhouse, east of Limpsfield, in 1940, and six pairs nested in the sand-pit on Limpsfield Common in 1939. There was a colony at Coney Hill sand-pit, Oxted, in 1940, one on Tilburstowhill Common in 1930, and one near Nutfield in 1932-33. In the Reigate district three colonies are known, one by the railway-line to Redhill, one in a sand-pit at Park Hill, and one in a pit by the Dorking road, two miles west of the town.

In North Surrey a small colony was reported in the Thanet sand at Waddon in 1930 and 1934, and another in the same formation at Beddington was deserted after 1933 owing to building operations. Another small colony in a gravel-pit at Mitcham Junction was deserted after 1937, when the pit began to be filled in. A breeding site in the gravel of the railway embankment near Earlsfield Station was also deserted after 1935, but was reoccupied in 1940. Until about 1924 three or four pairs nested annually in the sand-pit at Barn Elms, but the birds deserted after the pit was worked for sand and most of the old nesting-holes destroyed. A small colony reported to exist within a mile of Richmond Park in 1937 may have been the one at the Ham gravel-pits near Teddington Lock. At Weybridge there was a colony of about thirty pairs in a sandpit in 1939, and a small colony was noted in a private road-cutting at Brooklands about 1934. This account of the recent status of the species in Surrey north of the chalk shows how ephemeral the nature of their site makes most sand-martin colonies. Gravel and sand-pits are always liable to be filled in or worked again, and the advancing tide of building seems to have an adverse effect even where this does not happen.

North of the Thames, the only recent Bucks records are from Langley Marish in 1930-31, and near Langley sewage farm, possibly the same locality, in 1935. In the Herts part of the area patches of sand and gravel are widely distributed, but west of the Lea valley only three small colonies have been reported recently, at Bayford sand-pits in 1936-37, at a gravel-pit next to the Blackboy Inn, St Stephens, in 1939, and from a sand-pit on the Barnet bye-pass near North Mimms in 1940.

In South and West Middlesex there are many suitable gravel-pits in the Colne valley and in the Hounslow and Feltham districts, from several of which nesting has been reported recently, and in 1937 at least two pairs nested in a small sand-pit on Northwood golf course. A dozen or more pairs nested in a deep gravel-pit in Hurlingham grounds till 1927, when the pit was filled in. The natural site on the Thames near Shepperton has already been mentioned. Artificial sites on this side of the county include a hole in the wharf-side of a stonemason's yard near Putney Bridge, where a pair, probably one of those driven from Hurlingham, attempted to nest in 1929, and holes in the concrete quay of an asbestos works on the Grand Junction Canal at Harefield. In North and East Middlesex, the only recent records west of Lea valley are from Ken Wood, where the old site in the Bagshot beds was occupied at least as late as 1926, and Palmers Green, where a pair bred in a drain-pipe in the cement bank of Pymme's Brook in 1926-28.

In the Lea valley there were formerly many sand-martin colonies in gravel and ballast pits, but most of these have been deserted in the past twenty years, and the birds have taken to nesting in the drain-pipes of the aqueduct that runs southward from King George Reservoir. This habit was first noted as early as 1918. In 1923 several birds were observed at Rye House Station carrying nesting material into holes in the brick-work of the platform, just above the metals.

The only colony recorded in the rest of Essex since 1920 is one of a dozen pairs in a gravel-pit at Dagenham in 1938. Before 1920 several colonies were recorded in gravel-pits in the Hornchurch-Romford-Ilford area, now doubtless all built over, and in 1917 some resourceful birds nested in trenches dug for military training near Gidea Park Station.

The sand-martin is usually first seen in the London area in the last few days of March or the first few days of April. The earliest date on record is March 19, 1939, at St Albans, and the mean date of arrival since 1920 is April 6. Since 1920 the bird has been first observed in March in five years and in the first four days of April in six years. The latest date recorded is Oct. 30, 1932, at Beddington, and since 1930 the bird has last been recorded in October in every year but one, and in four years on or after Oct. 19. Two young birds were seen in a nesting-hole near Ilford in late September, 1910.

On the autumn migration large flocks, sometimes running into several hundreds, are frequently seen, especially at reservoirs and sewage farms, in August and September, and occasionally in late July or early October. They are often associated with swallows, but less often with house-martins. On the spring migration flocks are much smaller. Odd birds, and occasionally small parties, are not infrequently seen on passage over the waters in the parks of Inner London.

There is little information about the roosting of sand-martins in the area. A few migrating with swallows in April 1918 roosted in some reeds at Theydon Bois. At the Brasted colony in 1940 both birds were thought to roost in the nesting-hole.

A bird of a beautiful cinnamon-colour was seen at Brooklands sewage farm on Aug. 2, 1929.

R. S. R. F.

Teal. *Anas c. crecca* L.

This species has only been recorded as breeding in the London area near Cobham in 1930, near the western border of Middlesex in 1931 and probably in other years, and at Ruislip Reservoir from 1934-38. In the last locality two broods have been seen in three of the years and three broods in 1936, but there is no information for 1939-40. There are a few records of odd males in the breeding-season from other localities, notably Beddington, Brooklands and Epsom sewage farms, and in 1923 the Enfield district, while Ticehurst mentions the probability of breeding in the Keston district prior to 1909. It is doubtful, however, if more than a few pairs actually breed in the area.

As a winter visitor the teal appears first in the second half of August or early September, though large flocks are not usually present before October. The waters most favoured are Island Barn Res., Molesey (412 on 5.ii.38), King George Res. (122 + on 6.ii.37), Littleton Res. (400 + on 31.xii.29), Ruislip Res. (135 on 28.xii.40) and Staines Res. (c. 300 on 26.x.29), the maximum for each locality being given in brackets. Difficulties of counting on these large waters are considerable, hence many large flocks can never be recorded with precision and the above figures are given chiefly as guides. Elsewhere flocks of over 50 are unusual, though the species shows signs of increasing as a winter visitor to Hamper Mill, where on Nov. 19, 1938, a flock of 56 was seen. In 1915 a party of 62 was seen near Oxhey Hall (possibly at Hamper Mill), and the species was then considered to be "pretty common" in the Colne valley. The chief locality in the Lea valley was the Walthamstow Reservoirs until the construction of the King George Res., when this became more favoured.

In 1940 observation was much restricted. The presence of the unusually large number of c. 200 at Beddington on Feb. 3 and of several birds on the Thames between Barnes and Richmond in January and February suggests either that larger numbers than usual were present in the area as a result of the severe weather, or that many of their usual haunts in the area were frozen over. The return migration usually commences in February, with a passage movement in late March, while odd birds are frequently seen until early May.

In the duck census of the London area on Dec. 18, 1937, the total teal population was 853, one flock of 360 showing a proportion of 55 per cent. males. During the census for the winter of 1938-39 the highest total for the area was 622 on Feb. 18, with a drop to 274 on March 18. The percentage of males for the whole area ranged from 52 to 57 during the whole period October to March, but counts for Island Barn Res. alone have shown up to 65 per cent. males in a total of 158.

R. C. H.

Common Curlew. *Numenius a. arquata* (L.).

The Curlew is only a passage-migrant in the London area, except on the Thames estuary, where it is probably a winter-visitor. Its wild cry can not infrequently be heard in the quieter streets of the metropolis at night as it flies on migration several hundred feet overhead,

and it has exceptionally descended into one of the central parks. March, April, July, August and September are the months when the curlew is most frequently seen or heard passing through the London area. It has been heard passing over in every month of the year, but out of 55 dated records, fifteen each are in July or August, nine in September, eight in March, five each in April and June (all later than June 15), and only one or two in the other months.

There are also sight records for every month, mostly for reservoirs and sewage-farms. Out of 53 dated records, nine each are for April and August, seven each for January and February, four each for March, May, July and November, and one or two for the remaining months. The high frequency for January and February is due to the tendency of curlews to come inland in hard weather; they were reported from six different places in the London area in the cold spell of early 1940.

The Thames estuary above Gravesend is very little watched, and only five dated records are available (two in October, one each in April and December, and one from Romford sewage farm on June 13, 1939), but from other evidence it seems probable that some curlews winter along the river every year.

R. S. R. F.

Book Review.

Lundy, Isle of Puffins by Richard Perry. Lindsay Drummond, 1940. 12s 6d.

In this book the author of *At the Turn of the Tide* firmly establishes his reputation as an observer in the tradition of Selous and Howard. Eschewing for the most part the "purple patches" to which many people took exception in his former book, Mr Perry gives us in *Lundy* a fascinating and detailed account of the nesting and other behaviour of the 36,000 puffins, guillemots, razorbills and kittiwakes that breed on the island. It is a book that nobody interested in bird behaviour can afford to miss, and it can be warmly recommended to bird-lovers of all kinds. In few other books yet published can so intimate a description of the nesting habits of colonial birds be found, and while not everybody will agree with all Mr Perry's deductions from what he sees, no bird enthusiast can fail to appreciate and enjoy his almost cinematographic account of what does happen at the nest of an auk from beginning to end of the breeding season. Perhaps the most thrilling thing of all is his description of the way the razorbill and guillemot chicks leave the nesting ledge, diving headlong a hundred feet or more into the sea, against all credibility.

The book also contains a general description of the island, which will show those who have never been there what a delectable spot it is for a holiday, a short description of the nesting habits of cormorants, an account of the spring migration through Lundy, with a restatement of the author's well-known theories about migration, and a census of the breeding birds of the island.

R. S. R. F.



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30 MAY 1941